

Protecting Your Home While You're Away



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Your Neighborhood Specialist

A burglary occurs every 15 seconds in America

According to the FBI's Crime In the United States Reports. A majority of these crimes take place when many home owners are on vacations. Follow these steps to protect your home while you're away, so you can rest easy and enjoy your vacation.

Find a friend or relative to house-sit. This is the best option. Having someone in your home is the best way to deter potential thieves. Just be sure that it is someone you trust and who is familiar with your Home.

Lock ALL doors and windows. If a house sitter is not a possibility, the first and most important step to securing your home is to lock every door and window in your house. Don't forget about small attic or basement windows. Also secure the garage door and any garage windows.

Use timers on your lights. Automatic timers simulate occupancy by turning lights and other appliances (i.e. television or radios) on and off at random intervals during the day

day and evening. These are available at most hardware stores and cost approximately \$20.

Rely on your neighbors.

Make sure you find somebody to pick up your mail and news paper DAILY. And be sure to give a trusted neighbor a key to your home and your itinerary in case of emergency.



Wanted: A Good Contractor

Your home is one of your biggest investments. So it's no wonder that when it comes time to repairs or renovations to your home, you want to be sure that you've chosen a dependable contractor. It may take a little leg work to find the right contractor for your home, but the time invested will be well worth it. A good contractor should have 5 or more years experience. Most contracting industries offer professional designation that indicate a higher level of education and professionalism.

You should plan to solicit at least two or three bids from prospective contractors, but the first thing to do is to ask friends and neighbors if they can recommend anyone. Another option is to sign up with Angie's List (www.angieslist.com), a community website that pools customer reviews of contractors in various areas. There is a small monthly fee and a registration fee as well. A membership gives you access to hundreds of detailed reports from consumers.

No matter how you find a contractor it's important to **ALWAYS** check their references. You can also find contractors on Juanita's website under the "business directory" tab.

